

## **Holy Week Passion begins today; Palm Sunday commemorated around Orthodox world**



The holy Passion of our Savior begins today, presenting Joseph the all-comely as a pre-figuring of Christ. Through his ordeals, perseverance and eventual triumph, Joseph typifies in himself the betrayal, Passion, death and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To the commemoration of Patriarch Joseph is added the narration concerning the fig tree, which on this day was cursed and subsequently dried up because of its unfruitfulness. It portrayed the Jewish synagogue, which had not produced the fruit demanded of it, namely, obedience to God and faith in Him.

A day earlier, one week before the Feast of Great Pascha, Holy Easter, and at the dawn of Holy Week, Orthodoxy celebrated one of its most joyous feasts, Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday commemorates the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising of Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. On Palm Sunday, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner.

Orthodox Churches in every corner of the globe and Orthodox faithful around the world on Sunday evening also commemorated the Orthros Service of the Bridegroom, calling on us to accompany Christ the Savior in the culmination of the Holy Passion, in order to experience the true meaning of the Great and Holy Week and the climax of Resurrection.

The Pemptousia platform this Holy Week will live-stream all services from the St. George Cathedral in the Papagos district of east Athens. The Greek Byzantine Choir, under the direction Georgios Konstantinou, will perform the chants and psaltic complement.

### **Bridegroom (Nymfaio) Services around Greece**

Indicatively, on the Ionian Island of Corfu, the Metropolitan of Corfu, Paxos and the Diapontian Isles, His Eminence Nektarios on Sunday officiated at the Bridegroom Service at the Cathedral of the All-Holy Theotokos, while on Crete, the Metropolitan of Kissamos and Selinos, His Eminence Amphilochios, officiated at the solemn service at the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos.

Still elsewhere in Greece, the Bridegroom Service at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, in the western city of Agrinio, was officiated by the visiting Metropolitan of Dimitriados and Almyros, His Eminence Ignatios.

Palm Sunday was also reverently commemorated in a splendorous manner, with centuries-old Athonite rite, at the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi, on Mount Athos.

After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy a litany of the Holy Relics followed, led by the Elder Archimandrite Ephraim, the Abbot of the venerable monastery, and with the participation of Vatopedi Elders.

### **Palm Sunday in the Land of the Nile; Holy Land**

In another part of the world, and specifically from Egypt, the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Beatitude Theodoros II, officiated at the celebratory Orthros and subsequent Patriarchal Divine Liturgy at the Holy

Cathedral of the Archangels, in the Daher district, the center of the Arab-speaking Orthodox community.

His Beatitude was accompanied by hierarchs of the Alexandria Patriarchate.

Before the dismissal of the Archieratical Divine Liturgy, assembled palm branches were blessed and used in a litany by the clergy and faithful around the Cathedral, accompanied by the philharmonic band of the Greek Orthodox scouting troupe.

In the Holy Land, on the occasion of glorious Palm Sunday and Holy Week, His Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III called for the largest possible participation in Holy Week ceremonies and the Saturday of the Holy light at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

His Beatitude expresses his best wishes and expectations that all believers would be able to exercise their natural God-given right to reach the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, especially on Saturday of the Holy Light, and to worship freely and safely without restrictions, as was the case for 2000 years.

### **Serbian Patriarch Porfirije in Zagreb**

Back in southeast Europe, and on a final note, the Patriarch of Serbia, His Holiness Porfirije, celebrated the Divine Liturgy of Palm Sunday at the Cathedral of the Transformation of the Savior in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia.

In His sermon, Patriarch Porfirije referred to the meaning of the raising of Lazarus, as well as the Triumphant Entry of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, as commemorated on Palm Sunday.